

Saint Croix County 2018 Green Tier Legacy Community Annual Report

For Saint Croix County's participation in the Sustainability Component of the Green Tier Legacy Communities Charter

Summary of sustainable initiatives and activities undertaken in the County in 2018. Note that many of the long-term initiatives identified in the 2017 Annual Report are ongoing but are not reflected in this report as it is primarily focused on new initiatives and activities:

LAND USE

- Began 2nd year of St. Croix County Comprehensive Revision to the Zoning Ordinance which will include updates to the County's conservation design subdivision standards, expanded residential district options, home occupations and increased flexibility for growing, raising and marketing local food.
- Mixed Use Development – As part of the St. Croix County Comprehensive Revision to the Zoning Ordinance, draft language will be submitted for County Board approval in 2019 that would allow a Planned Development (PD) Zoning District. The PD District will accommodate master planned developments that cannot feasibly comply with the standards in any of the other zoning districts and that demonstrate a high degree of design quality or accomplishes an important public purpose. Design standard flexibility within a PD can include permitted and prohibited uses, density, lot size, coverage, setbacks, building height, open space, off-street parking, signs, landscaping, building design, pedestrian connections and other site elements.
- Street Connectivity - Promoted primarily during the planning stages of a subdivision, commonly referred to as preliminary plat. The St. Croix County Land Division Ordinance lists road layout standards which require connections to existing or planned road extensions and to adjacent un-platted property. In order to promote future connections, the ordinance prohibits a 'spite strip', which is a narrow strip of land between the proposed road and the edge of the subdivision boundary. In addition, general lot design standards include the requirement to have two or more interconnected accesses onto a public road for subdivisions with 30 lots or more.

TRANSPORTATION

- **The St. Croix County Bike and Pedestrian Plan**-The plan was approved by the St. Croix County Board of Supervisors on May 2, 2017 at their regular scheduled meeting. The St. Croix County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan was developed to serve as a guide for the further development of bicycle and pedestrian facilities in St. Croix County and as a strategy to enhance opportunities for bicycling and walking across the county for a wide variety of people—from school children to casual adult bicyclists to avid road cyclists. The Plan identifies a primary bike and pedestrian network to safely and efficiently serve bicyclists and pedestrians in St. Croix County. The Plan also includes a variety of recommendations for new and enhanced bikeway and trail facilities within the network that will provide a higher level of service than existing bikeway infrastructure in the county. -Information regarding The Plan is available on the St. Croix County website: <https://www.sccwi.gov/DocumentCenter/View/687/Bike-and-Ped-Plan-PDF?bidId=> Implementation of the plan has the potential to increase pedestrian and bicycle

transportation and reduce public per-capita VMR and GHG emission. Incorporating bicycling and pedestrian facilities into future development can help create healthy communities and enhance the quality of life.

- **The St. Croix County Transit Commission-**
- The St. Croix County Transit Commission was formed via resolution on February 8, 2018 by the St. Croix County Board of Supervisors at their regular scheduled meeting.
- The St. Croix County Transit Commission partnered with West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission in 2015 to gather information and present a Feasibility Study to the St. Croix County Stakeholder's.
- The Transit Commission consists of 9 members—2 Transportation Committee members; 1 County Board at large member; 6 citizens of St. Croix County. Appointments are made by the County Administrator pursuant to Wis. Statue §59.18(2)(c).
- Further information may be found on the St. Croix County website: <https://www.sccwi.gov/886/Transit-Commission>

ENVIRONMENT

- **Annual Tree Sales:**
- **Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP):**
- Annual Native Tree, Shrub and Plant Program: This program addresses utilization of native species, prevention of soil erosion and creation of windbreaks and wildlife habitat and corridors. St. Croix County sells coniferous, deciduous and fruit trees; deciduous shrubs and bushes and flats of butterfly, mesic-wet wildflowers, prairie grasses and wildflowers and woodland plants; about 15,000 total annually.

WATER

- Natural Resource Protection - The storm water practices installed in rural subdivisions since 1998, have been inspected and mapped. A GIS map was developed to help local units of government plan and address future maintenance needs.
- Soil erosion and pollution along the St. Croix River is minimized by requiring the installation of erosion control practices and infiltrating 100% of all the storm water runoff from new impervious surfaces for the first 1.5 inch rainfall event.
- Surface and Groundwater Quality Improvement activities in 2018 included: adoption of the Land and Water Resource Management Plan and approval by the Department of Ag, Trade and Consumer Protection; 12 well abandonments, 1 manure storage abandonment, 13,080 linear feet of grassed waterways established, 424 acres of nutrient management plans created, and 671.34 acres of cover crops established.

ENERGY

- **Energy Efficiency:** We are now 100% LED in County Buildings
- **Fleet-** SCC is looking at adding 4 Electric vehicles to our 2020 Fleet replacements
- **Charging Stations** – SCC is looking to add Public pay Charging Stations to our SCCSC Lot

New Buildings: Sustainability at the St. Croix County Highway Maintenance Facility

Low VOC paints / coatings

Polished concrete floor finishes provides high durability and extremely low maintenance costs

Acoustical Ceiling Tile with % recyclable content

Concrete contains fly ash

Precast Concrete superstructure (extended to the footings / use of a recycleable product)

Steel structural components contain up to 40% recycled steel

Carpet composed of recycled carpet products

Energy efficient fiberglass window frames and windows

Thermally broken door frames

Thermally broken glazing (windows)

High efficiency, automated HVAC systems

Low flow urinals

Energy efficient skylight and translucent wall panels (R-7.0 vs. R-3.0 for conventional glazing)

Re-use / re-location of existing shop / maintenance equipment (welders, grinders, band saw, vehicle lifts, etc.)

TPO roof system – more durable / longer lasting

LED lighting systems

Use of occupancy sensors, dual lighting, timers and photo cells to control lighting

Regionally sourced dimensional wood products

Overhead doors with an R-17+

Unheated metal building systems (contains up to 40% recycled steel)

Regionally sourced desktops / countertops

(roof) Water harvesting system that adds water to the automatic wash system (approximately 10,000+ gallons)

Quartz and stainless steel countertops – highly durable and low maintenance

Future Sustainable Items at the St. Croix County Highway Maintenance Facility

Solar panels – electrical generation (capable of being placed over the maintenance bays)

(not used now due to budget constraints / provisions made to be used in the future)

Geothermal HVAC system

(not used now due to budget constraints / provisions made to be used in the future)

(natural gas prices are not expected to increase more than 1%/year for the next 8 years – further,

Geo thermals biggest benefit comes when it is used for air conditioning. Generally, only the office / admin

WASTE

- Two tire collection events were held at five co-sponsoring municipalities. 14.94 tons of tires were collected in the spring and 18.01 tons of tires were collected in the fall.
 - Two appliance collection events were held at six co-sponsoring municipalities. 16.81 tons of appliances were collected in the spring and 20.02 tons of appliances were collected in the fall.
 - 20,806 pounds of latex paint was collected at the 2018 Clean Sweep Hazardous Waste collection events. This is 44.2% more latex paint collected than the 2017 collection events.
 - 83,854 pounds of hazardous waste was collected at our Clean Sweep collection from 36 businesses, 22 farms and 840 households. This is an increase of 7.45% of the weight of hazardous waste collected compared to the 2017 collections.
 - 149 special event recycling bins were rented out for 9 events.
 - Two issues of the Your Wasteline recycling newsletter were mailed to 41,720 county addresses in April and September.
 - Recycling specialist spoke to 24 community, school and civic groups, providing recycling education to 579 people.
 - Sold 54 compost bins in conjunction with the tree sale to promote backyard composting of yard waste and food scraps.
 - County Pinterest page continued to be utilized to provide information on natural cleaners, reuse projects, waste reduction, composting and recycling facts.
 - Recycling Facebook page has 740 “likes” at the end of 2018. This is an increase of 54 “likes” during 2018.
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- Healthy Community Planning
 - **Planning:** SCC Comprehensive Plan includes transportation, bicycle/pedestrian, and open space planning.
 - **Healthy Food Access:** SCC has increased healthy food access through the following: WIC participants are given farmers market vouchers; a community garden at the SCC Service Center where harvest is donated to the public and schools; United Way of Saint Croix Valley has a mobile food pantry at Deer Park; and SCC Zoning Ordinance allows roadside produce stands, bee keeping, and raising chickens. The United Way St.

Croix Valley has built the John Coughlin Food & Resource Center to store food and commodities for redistribution to local food pantries and food shelves increasing access to healthy foods.

- **Physical Activity and Access:** SCC is promoting physical activity and access through initiatives by the Healthier Together-Pierce and St. Croix Counties Coalition, St. Croix County Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan, St. Croix County Outdoor Recreational Plan, SCC Zoning Ordinance requirements, sections of the SCC Comprehensive Plan, St. Croix Bike and Pedestrian Trail Coalition, New Richmond Pathway Committee, the formation of the SCC Transit Commission.
- **Recreation and Access:** St. Croix County has been purchasing land for additional park facilities. St. Croix County will operate and maintain a new multi-state trail, St. Croix River Crossing Loop Trail between Houlton and Stillwater Minnesota. The 4.5 mile trail crosses the new St. Croix River bridge and the historic lift bridge. This summer the trail and two Wisconsin trailheads will open to the public. The main trailhead is across from the Houlton Elementary School and will have educational panels to enhance recreation, history and natural resource education. In addition SCC will develop and open a new hiking and nature watch park, Orf Family Overlook on Bass Lake later this summer. Three additional properties will be developed to provide more outdoor recreation opportunities over the next five years.
- **Housing:** SCC has a Dementia Care Specialist who assists in developing dementia friendly communities, opening the Kitty Rhoades Memorial Memory Care Center, and the City of New Richmond and community partners have worked to address affordable housing.
- **Crime Prevention and Other Harm Reduction:** SCC has provided ALICE training in the case of an active shooter to its county employees; designed/redesigned county buildings; established a safety committee for the SCC Service Center and SCC Health Care Center and implemented policies all to protect the public and employees at county government buildings.
- **Climate Change:** SCC has participated in building local capacity to address the public health impacts of climate and extreme weather through a BRACE grant. SCC Public Health Emergency Plan includes planning for weather emergencies.
- **Noise:** Chapter 42 Human Health Hazards Ordinance allows residents to file/make a complaint for follow up and/or investigation. The St. Croix County zoning code does require noise to be a consideration when approving conditional use permits for commercial kennels and major home occupations.
- **Employee Health:** SCC has implemented a SCC-Health and Wellness Committee for its county employees that includes a number of health initiatives. Multiple county and community partners are involved in the newly formed CHAT group discusses community health and wellness issues.
- **Waste Pharmaceuticals:** SCC has an established network for community members to drop off their waste pharmaceuticals/medications at area police stations that is promoted in the county. The Public Health Emergency plan has a waste management guidance in Section 10.

Education

- Total number of environmental education contacts: 6159
- Student events: Presentations Requested – 54; Field Days – 5; Conservation Speaking Contest participants– 7 county, 9 area, state; County winner came in 3rd at Area; Conservation Poster Contest participants– 1 county, 14 area, state; WI Envirothon participants – 125; Hudson High School FFA & St. Croix Central FFA had teams; Career Fairs – 4 career fairs; New Richmond Middle School, St. Croix Central, Hammond, Hudson Middle School, St. Patrick School, Hudson; Greenwood Leaf Rake

- Adult events: Snowshoeing events –27 enrolled; (One 4-H program; four other events; three canceled due to no enrollment or weather); St. Croix Summit – 200 participants; Master Naturalist Classes – 8 classes with 20 participants; St. Croix Valley Teacher Workshop – 10 participants; Bookworm Trail READS – 1 event held, 18 children
- Volunteers (volunteer numbers not included in the total participation number): Total number of volunteers – 23; Total Volunteer Hours – 143.5